



London Legacy Development Corporation Quality Review Panel

Report of Planning Application Review Meeting: Westfield Plot M2

Thursday 6 June 2024

Auditorium 3, Level 10, 5 Endeavour Square, Stratford, E20 1JN

Panel

Hari Phillips (chair)

Kate Digney

Attendees

Sara Dawes	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Donald Roberts	London Legacy Development Corporation
Kuljeet Sibia	London Legacy Development Corporation
Ben Hull	London Borough of Newham
Cindy Reriti	Frame Projects
Hanako Littlewood	Frame Projects

Apologies / report copied to

Anthony Hollingsworth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
Catherine Smyth	LLDC Planning Policy and Decisions Team
James Bolt	London Borough of Newham
Halil Yorel	London Borough of Newham
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects

Note on process

The Quality Review Panel comments below follow on from two pre-application reviews. Panel members who attended the previous meeting were: Hari Phillips (chair); Jane Briginshaw; Russell Curtis; Kate Digney; Jennette Emery-Wallis; and Jonathan Hagos.

1. Project name, site address and application reference

Westfield Plot M2, Westfield Stratford City, 157 Montfichet Road, London E20 1EJ
24/00113/FUL

2. Presenting team

Marc Williams	Allford Hall Monaghan Morris
Julian Lewis	East
James Buckingham	Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield

3. Planning authority briefing

The site is located within the Stratford Metropolitan Town Centre and relates to the Stratford International station end of Westfield Shopping Centre, fronting onto Hitchcock Lane service road. Westfield Shopping Centre sits in Zone 1 of the Stratford City Planning Permission. Reserved matters applications for the various shopping centre plots, M2 to M8, were approved in 2008 to 2010, with the shopping centre completed in 2011.

Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield submitted a full planning application in March, for purpose-built student accommodation to provide 520 bed spaces in a new building on top of the shopping centre. The proposal includes amendments to the shopping centre roof, a reduction in shopping centre car parking spaces, new community sports / leisure facilities and new public realm and landscape, including a public route at roof-level.

Planning officers welcome the panel's comments on the south elevation of the building and on the ground level public realm and landscape, including whether the scheme meets the requirements of Local Plan Policy BN. 5.



4. Quality Review Panel's views

Summary

The panel supports the concept for the public realm and landscape design and feels that the scheme will meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy BN.5 if the comments in this report are addressed with planning officers. However, confidence is needed that sufficient public realm and landscape benefit will be delivered given that a significant portion of the landscape proposals, i.e. the proposals for Hitchcock Lane as well as the copse of trees and the sculptural plinth on Celebration Avenue, are all outside of the red line boundary and contingent on third party agreement. An alternative set of drawings should be included in the planning application to comprehensively illustrate how the scheme will deliver sufficient public realm and landscape benefit and meet the requirements of Policy BN.5 in the event that negotiations with HS1 Ltd are not successful. The panel supports officers' use of conditions to secure the delivery of the public realm and landscape proposals.

The proposed artwork on the building soffit and along Hitchcock Lane, and coloured street furniture and integrated planting has the potential to provide a joyful area of public realm. The panel likes the idea of a trail of sculptural objects linking the spaces together, but there are currently too many competing ideas which dilute the concept. Further work is needed to create a clear hierarchy in Hitchcock Square to ensure that the student entrance is clear and legible, and that street furniture is complementary to the trees and planting. The proposals for Hitchcock Lane should be limited to the bold mural, totems and the lighting. Similarly, the proposals for Roundhouse Lane and the station forecourt area should be clarified with the bollards relegated to their functional role, to allow the coloured street furniture and soft landscape to draw people into and through the space. Further thought should be given to the placement of the street furniture, as well as to an increase in the amount of greening, to soften the dominant hard landscape. Options should be explored to improve the boundary of the play space with a soft green edge, to replace the picket fence. The sculptural plinth will provide welcome greening in views down Celebration Avenue, but additional planting should be provided to complement the 'sweets on a plate' concept and to provide year-round interest.

Strategic approach

- Alternative public realm and landscape drawings should be provided to officers, to give confidence that a high quality scheme will be delivered, to meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy BN.5, if the proposal presented, including interventions outside of the red line boundary and reliant on approval from HS1 Limited, cannot be delivered.
- Alternative proposals could include, for example, improvements that extend further down Roundhouse Lane, and major enhancement of the play space.



- As noted in the previous report, detailed drawings should be provided, including a plan that shows the areas of constraint in the public realm, and technical details to give confidence that the proposals can be delivered.
- The option of a free-standing structure to support the mural and lighting proposed for Hitchcock Lane, in lieu of reliance on fixing it to the wall belonging to HS1 Ltd, should be investigated.
- Thought should be given to clarifying and strengthening the key design concepts of the colourful 'sweets on a plate' and the soffit mural. A strong relationship should be established between them.
- Further consideration should be given to ensure that the stone seating elements are accessible and welcoming for everyone to use, including the provision of armrests and suitable backrests

Roundhouse Lane and Stratford International forecourt

- Further greening is needed to soften the dominance of hard landscape in this area. The panel welcomes the proposal to plant additional trees at the end of Roundhouse Lane and suggests that open tree pits should be used and the greening at ground level increased, to support a sustainable urban drainage approach.
- The integrated planting and seating works well in Hitchcock Square and, given the underground constraints, should also be used on Roundhouse Lane and in the station forecourt to increase the greening.
- The boundary treatment of the play space should be reimagined and improved through the use of soft landscaping, to enhance the experience of children using the play space, to help soften the surrounding area, and to knit the play space into the proposals.
- The panel supports the 'sweets on a plate' concept in regard to the street furniture, but further thought is needed regarding the placement of each piece, to ensure that pedestrian movement through the public realm is legible and inclusive, including for people with visual impairments.
- The bollards should be relegated to their functional role, to allow the coloured street furniture to draw people into and through the space.
- Further thought should be given to the location of the cycle racks, so that they do not dominate the space.



- The ground lighting provides a welcome uplift to the undercroft of the Stratford International forecourt.

Hitchcock Square

- The proposed species of trees and plants will add welcome interest to the square. Given the additional colour of the new paving, the panel suggests that the colour of the street furniture should be complementary to the planting.
- Further consideration should be given to the location of the street furniture and planters to ensure that the entrance to the student accommodation is both legible and easily accessible.
- Thought should be given to the location of the planters at the bottom of the escalators, to ensure that there is clear access and sightlines for people using the escalators and to ensure that the planters will benefit from rainfall, reducing the need for irrigation.
- Consideration should be given to extending the new granite paving of Hitchcock Square to Stratford International, to create an area of transition for pedestrians moving through the space.

Hitchcock Lane

- The panel supports the proposal for a bold mural along Hitchcock Lane, linked to the mural on the soffit of the building, and suggests that the angled mirrors should be removed. The mural could evolve along the length of the lane to highlight, for example, the entrances to Westfield Stratford City shopping centre, and this could include a seating component.
- The integration of lighting is supported, but consideration should be given to how the artwork and lighting will work together.
- A commitment to use vitreous enamel should be made in the planning application, to ensure that the artwork will be robust enough to endure over time.
- The panel supports officers' use of conditions to ensure that a competition is held to select a local artist to design the murals.

Sculptural plinth

- The panel welcomes the consideration that has been given to the construction and detail of the proposed sculptural plinth on Celebration Avenue. Options should be explored to provide additional planting that complements the 'sweets on a plate' concept and will provide year-round interest.



Architectural expression

- The panel welcomes the design team's improvements to the south elevation.

Next steps

- The Quality Review Panel considers that the scheme will meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy BN.5, if the comments above are addressed in consultation with the planning officers.

